

From: Justin Smith [mailto:freedivesmith@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, January 30, 2008 4:14 PM

To: MLPAComments

Subject: Sonoma Coast MPA proposals; Support for Draft proposal 2 (jd)

I have a degree in fisheries biology from Humboldt state and I understand the need for the MLPA. I am also a sport diver who frequently dives the Sonoma coast line. I try to dive at least once a week as long as the ocean is calm enough to dive. If I can't dive one week I make up for it by diving multiple days during the following week. I spend the majority of my free time and money abalone diving or spearfishing in Salt Point state park. As you know there are two MPA proposals that will include a large portion of Salt Point state park (from Gerstle cove to black point) as a state marine reserve. Myself and many sport divers will be seriously impacted if an SMR is placed on this stretch of coast line. Salt point state park is an excellent area for sport diving for the following reasons:

- 1.) The land on this stretch of coast line is owned by the state parks system it and allows for multiple public access points.

- 2.) There are 2 areas to launch kayaks in this stretch of coastline. In addition to kayaks small boats can be launched at Gerstle Cove.

- 3.) We generally have strong northern winds in the afternoon on our coastline.

Therefore it is important for safety reasons to head north in the morning so we can return safely to our launch point once the afternoon winds and wind waves build. If the 7 miles north of Gerstle Cove are made into an SMR then the Gerstle Cove launch point will be useless for kayakers and small boat operators since we would be forced to head south to fish which would be very dangerous.

- 4.) The unique shape of Fisk Mill Cove provides protection from a northwest swell.

Therefore Fisk Mill Cove is often the safest place to dive on the Sonoma coast. Last year there were nine dive related fatalities in our area. This sport does not need to become more dangerous by limiting our safe diving locations.

As a sport diver I strongly support draft proposal 2 (jd). This proposal would hardly impact sport divers on the Sonoma coast while still providing the level of environmental protection that the MLPA has promised. Draft proposal 3 (tc) would not be ideal for sport divers, however it is not nearly as bad as draft proposal 1 (ec) and Draft Proposal 4 (JC). **I am firmly against draft proposal 1 (ec) and Draft Proposal 4 (JC).** IF either of these proposals were to pass they would drastically impact the sport diving community.

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